1856

MAN AND HIS INSTITUTIONS

HENRY WARD BEECHER'S

ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION

OF

Collegiate and Theological Education

AT THE WEST.

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BEFORE THE

SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF COLLEGIATE AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AT THE WEST,

DELIVERED IN TREMONT TEMPLE,
BOSTON, MASS., MAY 28, 1856.

BY

REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER,

PASTOR OF THE PLYMOUTH CHURCH, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

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ADDRESS.

MAN AND HIS INSTITUTIONS.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER,

Pastor of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, N. Y.

MAN is born, by God's ordaining power, with a separate nature, with special personal powers, which he can not alienate, and which none can take from him. His reason is his own; his affections are his own; his moral nature is his own. Into that individuality he is born, upon it he lives, on account of it God holds him accountible. He dies in his own personality, and goes alone, by himself, to the judgment. God respects and maintains the individuality of man, and will not let society rub it out. He can not, like a chemical agent, go out of one nature, by combination, into another. Like a thread, he may go to the composition of a fabric, but comes out of the loom of society a single, continuous, perfect thread, retaining its own nature and color through all the figures of the pattern.

Man combines in himself harmoniously two apparently incompatible elements, perfect independence and perfect cohesion with others. He is at the same time sharply individual, and thoroughly composite. He is at once solitary and social; a perfect single being, and yet organized as an element into a community of beings.

It is the individuality of man that is the source of his power; and the strength and power of the individual is the secret of the strength of society itself. A state of society which finds it necessary to repress the individual, to prevent his development, to curtail and

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absorb him, so that *society* is greater than its citizens, the state more important than the men that live in it, is at variance with the designs of God and the nature of man! And that society is the strongest, the most normal and healthy, which leaves its individual citizens their utmost liberty, their utmost growth, and their fullest strength.

Nothing else on earth is so various in endowment, so far-reaching in capacity, so wonderful in development, so complex in relations as man. All the stores of art; all the fruits of human endeavor; all temples and sculpture; all pictures and embellishments; all treasures of skill and books; all cities and inventions; all laws, philosophies, and ordinances, are not to be compared for value with any one single man that uses them, and is yet superior to them. They are but servants. He alone is master.

The tree is yet more than the apple which drops from it. Man is of more worth than all the effects which he produces. Next to God, man is God! And it should be so. He is the son of God.

But this original power of individual man needs means of exercising itself. God works by *thinking*. Effects follow volitions. But between human volitions and effects there must be some intermediate instrument. Men pour forth their power through material instrumentalities. Society is the aggregate of all those instruments by which individuals exert their separate personalities.

A man without institutions is a fountain without an egress; like a soul without bodily members to work with; like a body without a hand, or a hand without fingers.

Man is the elementary power, and the supreme value. But for his own greatest good he requires institutions; they are the means by which man acts, and without which he never could develop himself, or make use of his power were it developed.

While the first of all civic truths is the *liberty, power*, and individuality of man, the second truth must be, the necessity of *the civil state, of laws, of wise institutions.*

And it must never be forgotten that, indispensable as they are, institutions and society can *give* nothing to man. They only afford him the means of using that which belongs to him by the right of creation. Man is *the master of himself—society his indispensable servant;* this is the one truth in its two elements.

Where society interferes with individual rights, and limits the action of citizens, it is not ever, because society requires something which is inconsistent with the liberty of the individual, but because the individual requires for his full development and growth, often, that one part of his nature should be held in that the other parts

may grow. Men's passions must be kept back to let their affections grow. Man's secular nature must not be absorbing and tyrannical, refusing to give scope and growth-room to his moral nature. All penal restrictions in society are, in the root philosophy, not aimed at the repression of power in the individual, but rather toward his augmentation, his greater power. They are, in their large effects, toward liberty, and not away from it. No law, no institution, no society that diminishes the individual for the sake of making the whole strong, is sound.

The strength of society lies in the power and wide freedom of its citizens. The wisdom of an institution is not in what it gets from men, but in what it can do to express their powers, and serve them!

This distinction in favor of the liberty of men, as against their own laws and institutions, is fundamental. It is in this philosophy that governments are separated and characterized.

All monarchic governments claim that *society* is greater than man —the whole, than the individuals—that man's laws and institutions are greater and more sacred than *he* is.

All governments of true liberty must recognize, in Man, the source of power and sacredness. Man is greater than law. Man is holier than government. Man is the master of law. Institutions are the servants of men. One doctrine leads to tyranny; the other leads to liberty.

With these guards and explanations, I proceed to develop the nature of institutions.

1. When, for the sake of greater force, several or many men come together to pursue a common end, they are styled an *Association;* but if they bring together their means or instruments of working, and *organize them* in some material form, by investment or buildings, they grow to be an institution. An institution is, then, a principle organized into a material shape. It is an incarnated moral principle. It is a truth born into a body.

The name Institution, however, is select, being applied chiefly to organizations of intellectual or moral power.

If a man gather together his neighbors, that by speech he may exert a moral influence upon them, it is but a casual gathering; but if he erect a building, if provision is made for continual assemblies, if it is ordained that speakers shall be successively employed, that when one dies, his place shall be supplied by another, then there is an *institution* of instruction.

If a kind heart, in teaching his own children, gather up also a few from among the ignorant, it is but a casual work. If, now, he

add to this the element of continuance and the physical means of continuing, it becomes an *institution* of learning. A school is an everlasting schoolmaster. It is a device by which, when the first schoolmaster dies, he shall leave an artificial body which is to receive in succession the separate souls of unnumbered schoolmasters ; and thus, by the metempsychosis of institutions, the children shall never be left without rule and ferule !

A mother, in caring for her own babes, is tenderly touched that in her neighborhood are babes that have no mother. She brings them to her nursery, and is for the time a mother to them. But she must die, while orphans are always living somewhere. If maternal love can be embodied and made both constant and perpetual, then that incarnation of a mother's love is an institution. An Orphan's Institution is a body to which God gives the permission of never dying, by supplying new mothers' hearts to throb in it. The element of beauty makes art-institutions. Mathematical truths make scientific institutions of various kinds.

An INSTITUTION, therefore, may be defined to be an artificial body animated by some principle, for the sake of prolonging its influence through the successive lives of different individuals who administer it. It splices men's lives together, and makes a bridge over the space between generations—over which a truth may pass and travel on forever. It is artificial immortality.

It is this element of *enduring* that distinguishes institution from association. By association and organization, men gain power and scope ; they grow width-wise. By institutions, they gain *continuance ;* they grow length-wise. And thus we return to our first expression, that men increase their power, incarnating and organizing moral influences, so that there may be both *latitude* and *longitude* to their power !

Institutions are of two classes, those whose office it is to *develop man's power ;* and those whose office it is to furnish to that developed power the machinery for activity.

The first are educational institutions ; the others range from the bottom of society to the top, representing each grade of faculty in the human soul. They are industrial, commercial, social, and civil. They concentrate the scattered forces of individual men, apply them continuously, and perpetuate their existence through long periods.

Although our theme more especially regards educational institutions, yet we shall speak of all those which apply, as well as those which develop, individual force, in those respects in which they have a common nature.

The first want of society is the fullness, the liberty, the vivacity

and freshness of its individual citizens. No state is permanently strong which absorbs the liberty of the individual into the body politic. If the *state* is the great value; if men are only bricks, separately worthless, and good only when laid in orderly rows and held by the cement of laws, then it will come to pass that, in a little time, men will begin to shrink, to dry up, to wither away. A state whose citizens are but the pabulum of the state, will soon have nothing to feed on, and will be no better than a pyramid enormously built for the pitiful purpose of holding dead men's dust through worthless ages! Men are the roots and leaves—society is the tree which they make. The trunk and branches are but the frame. The life lies in the extremities.

But individualism needs help. Men are stronger to conceive than to execute, and one man may devise what only a hundred can achieve. Common good requires *association*. This is the first step toward Institution. Association is simply combination. It does not yet incarnate a principle so that it shall work by physical instruments, and continue by its own enduring nature. Men are short-lived; they drop the thread before the pattern is half done. The shuttle moves slower and slower after sixty, and the loom stops often at half that number of years. How shall the threads be taken up again? What shall unite men to carry forward common enterprises? How shall the variableness of the individual, crippled by sickness sometimes, and sometimes swayed by casual attractions—wearied often, and sometimes quite cast down, daunted, or cajoled—pushed too hard, or held back too far by all the influences which throng life—how shall we give continuity to the force of the individual—concentrate it and carry it forward over long periods of time—except by supplementing one man by another, and, as the unequal expansion of metals works steadiness for the pendulum, so, by the inequality of dispositions, work a symmetrical whole for the individual? Setting a fresh man over against one man's weariness, a strong man over against his weakness, a wise man, where he is unskilled, thus using one man to fill up another with, and by succession, as a kind of splicing, draw out the life of a design, through many men's natural lives, giving immortality to our purposes!

If, then, societies become dry and mechanical, falling into routine, and losing new growths, when *men* are swallowed up in institutions; so, on the other hand, without the converging and perpetuating power of institutions, men are variable, scattering, discordant, lying along the shore of time like sand, rather than lifting up society, like a mountain promontory, the brow of whose cliff defies the wave, and looks far out over the ocean, not afraid of its storms!

That institutions furnish coverts for power, that they may be turned against men, and with subtile suction draw out his life-blood, that they may be made serviceable to the malignant passions as much as to the normal sentiments, can not be doubted. Institutions are to be watched. We are to keep the most zealous guard over them. They are not only to be more trusted than men, but they are to be more vigorously suspected. They tend to deteriorate. They are easily and often turned against the very things for which they were created. The principle of which the institution was an incarnation, dies within it, and leaves but a husk or shell.

Thus institutions for benevolence become sinecures of selfishness; institutions to enable men safely to despise the world become hospitable mansions in which men entertain the world; institutions of religion become secular forces; institutions for the truth become the strongholds of error; institutions for exemption from temptation, for devout meditation, for purity, become the hot-beds of impurity, the very webs of indolence on which vices hang innumerable. This only teaches us that this world requires vigilance. The best things must be *kept* good.

Even if we would, we could not change the nature of things. The malignant passions *are* instituted; they maintain their power by this wisdom. Selfishness is instituted in the world. Power is instituted; pride is instituted. All the evils of the soul are incarnated, organized, and connected, working into each other, and perpetuating the reign of sin and crime on earth.

We can not meet the drilled and disciplined battalions of evil with a scattering guerilla warfare. We must institute Justice, Truth, Love, Peace, Purity.

Men are showers; associations are streams and reservoirs. Institutions are hydraulic and hydrostatic instruments by which to apply the liquid force! Men can not live without institutions, and institutions can not live vigorously without great, free men. They are not antagonistic; they are co-operative. They are like father and son. The parent protects the weakness of infancy and leads the son up to his manhood. That manhood, in turn, takes the weakness of age into its arms, and the old man is strong in the cradle of his son's bosom!

Without institutions, men stand still. The wanderers of the desert, nomadic, and without institutions, stand now where Abraham stood four thousand years ago. Nothing is collected and transmitted from generation to generation. Each generation consumes all that it raises. There is no overplus—no transmission—nothing to transmit. Under such circumstances, men are not *lig-*

neous, growing upon old growths, but *herbaceous*, planted every spring and dying every winter!

By their institutions, men are a Race. By institutions, they outlive Time. By these institutions, they become ubiquitous; they redeem their souls from death, leaving them on earth to work after their forms decay. For men, living as isolated individuals, die; institutions catch their genius and live on, and are like trees whose leaves do fall every season, but trunk and bough carry forward the life of the tree through a hundred winters!

The first and universal danger of institutions is *materialization*. Men form institutions by giving to a PRINCIPLE a body, that it may walk or work among men. Once incarnated, the soul of the principle is apt to be neglected, and its body supremely cared for.

Churches are institutions designed to bring the spirit of religion to bear upon human life. Once created, they are perverted when the safety of the organization is more thought of than the power of its central principle. Christ may be imprisoned in Christian churches. There is death, when the soul dies, and the form only is left.

Denominations are tending perpetually to this mistake, maintaining ecclesiastical institutions by the repression of moral power. To keep the form of the *institution*, they sacrifice the principle for which it was created. They quarrel about the *candlestick* till the *candle* falls and is extinguished. In this way an institution is transformed, and resists the influences which it was erected to express. Laws may be employed to destroy that justice which they were intended to guard. Constitutions may come to protect the very evils they were made to exclude, and to destroy the very principle they were formed to cherish.

The transformation of institutions by which they continue to express the life of the age, is like that of plants—some plants, dying every year, replant themselves by new seed. Some continue by overlaying the past with a new growth, and give to every summer new branches and fresh leaves!

Those institutions that are nearest to human life, that feel its transforming power most, will quietly change as it changes, like skull to brain, and live on without revolution; while those that are fortified against change, and meant by donors to be forever the same, will in the end not only be changed, but undergo changes by the worst revolutionary processes!

The peculiar training of the East has been *by* institutions and toward them. Nowhere else have they been wiser, more in consonance with man's nature and true liberty. Nowhere else have men

had so wisely blended the power of Institutions with the everlasting variety and freshness of individuality. Nowhere else have institutions sprung so directly from the people, and in their whole influence served to augment and improve the people! We are what we are by reason of our institutions. Our civilization is characterized by them. Like all strong growths, it is infested with over-growths and water-sprouts. There is some danger that we shall *institute* too minutely, and shall cease to act individually, spontaneously. Our people seek to organize every thing. We organize for inquiry. We organize to answer. We organize to give advice. We organize for pleasure. We distribute tracts by system. We institute our charity, until we are in danger of seeking to do nothing with the generous glow of personality, and every thing in corporate character.

A pound of tea is to be sent to the poor. One way is for the heart that pitied to put a hand into the pocket, procure the tea, carry it with a hearty good-will, shake hands with all the children, comfort the parents with hopeful words and sympathy, and go home a happier and a better man.

But our people tend to *institute* every thing. A meeting is called and regularly formed. The constitution is adopted, officers with specified duties elected, a committee appointed, and the pound of tea is borne forth upon official hands, and constitutionally delivered. Nobody is to be thanked; a committee gave it; a society sent it; but the human heart never thanks any thing but men.

And yet this excess is the indication of the nature of our people, who are the most *individually free* on earth, but whose unbounded freedom is saved from license by this innate or inbred disposition to *institute* action! IT IS OUR MISSION TO CREATE INSTITUTIONS, which shall express, but never control, the power of free citizens!

God has prepared a field. The West broods upon her nest for young States, and leads them forth as an eagle its eaglets!

The special want of the new States is that which is the special abundance of the East. The want and the supply are happily proportioned. Civil institutions will spring forth without help. Industrial institutions will come forth under the strong suggestions of interest. Religious and Educational Institutions are those which are in need of fostering care. Colleges and Theological Institutions, with their wealth of library, cabinets, and apparatus, are a gift which includes all gifts. You never can convey to a people the details and fruits of civilization, but only the awakening, creative force of civilization. Civilization must go as yeast, not as

bread! The only proper supply of a people's wants is to teach them how to supply themselves.

That which the West needs is not so much the educated men of the East, as the Institutions by which to educate her own men. These are the suns that spread the East with harvests, and fill the hands with bounty, that were held out for supply!

Colleges stimulate society through every nerve. They give power to the liberal professions. They foster industry by giving intelligence to the citizen. Colleges civilize the hand and put brains into its palm. The hand of an intelligent freeman thinks more than the head of a slave. Give colleges, and you give necessarily every thing which manhood can perform. You give that which arouses manhood within men—which inspires them to become inspirers! Institutions which develop men are the bosoms of God, from which society draws its life!

There is an impression with many, that our colleges and universities do but favor the children of the rich, and the wants of those who are to be scholars by profession, of literary men, and of those who are by the prescriptive right of certain callings, to walk above the level of common occupations, while the children of laborers, of artisans, of the mass of citizens, can not experience their benefits.

Even if this were so, we know not why colleges should be discouraged. A man is a man, if his father was rich! The exclusion is not arbitrary and forceful, but arises simply from the inability or indisposition of men to meet the expenses of advantages which are equally proffered to all! Are not the apples that hang in the top of the tree the largest and ripest, because the children that look wistfully up are too small to reach, and too weak to club them?

But it is not so. Our colleges do serve the necessities of society, from the top to the bottom, in a way which will require for its exposition some insight into the law by which influences in society work.

Society reaches up as a plant does, with successive joints from root to blossom. The mind itself affords the scale on which society *deploys*. The physical forms and passions are the mind's lowest faculties; and that part of society which in the main represents these forces, is the lowest. The executive and selfish powers are next above, and that part of society which represents physical executive life stands next.

The domestic affections are yet higher in the mind; and those whose force in life is through these, hold a corresponding rank. Then the moral sentiments are highest; and they that represent these hold the highest rank in a truly developed society.

Although this classification will not be found to be developed with such even edges, in real life, it is because society is yet like an abused tree in a poor soil, unevenly grown, and cramped and dwarfed. But as a tree, however treated, is always seeking to follow out and express the image which God wrapped up in it, so society is forever swaying to the influence of an inward form, and seeking to develop an expression of it, and the relative gradations and value of society are found in the scale of man's mind.

Thus society is not a level expanse of men without depth. It is a thing of vast depth and thickness. It is made up of innumerable little circles touching each other on every side, and ascending and descending from a middle point by successive layers and strata.

It is to be remarked, too, that the enlightenment and civilization of society increases the number of circles, and increases the distance between the top and bottom. *Growth* in civilization is never toward simplicity, but toward complexity. Growth in the individual is never toward fewer wants, but toward more. There are as many appetites in the full man as there are parts and faculties in his being. Every power needs its own food. The same is true of society. And in its expansion there are formed new gradations, new circles, new strata, one above the other. The bottom of society may be steadily rising ; and it may reach by-and-by where the top once stood, but the top will have gone up yet more rapidly, and the distance will be greater than ever between top and bottom. There will always be somebody found to be at the top. Nor is there a present likelihood that we shall not find enough to represent the bottom. And there will be as many intermediate circles as can be made up, not only by the number of human faculties in the soul, but by all their infinite combinations. These successive spheroids of society will be indistinguishable to the most subtile analysis, as drops of water are, while *in* the sea, inseparable one from another, as cells and cellules are in the living plant, which we know to be there, though the eye can not detect, nor the unaided hand separate !

It is more than a question of curiosity—What is the law of the circulation of influence, between these parts and tissues, of organized society ? The answer must furnish the philosophy of education.

We shall mention only the working of influence in one direction, viz., from the top downward. To all superior influences there is a double way of working—first, by a general and diffused power over the whole of society, as the sun shines over the whole continent at once ; and second, by a permeating and *leaching* way, as the rain which falls first upon the surface works down, from particle to particle, from stratum to stratum.

The highest minds most powerfully affect the minds only second to them, and enter into and form a part of those which, in their turn, do not so much reflect the influence, as exert an influence of their own, upon those minds next below, derived from the working upon them of those above; and these, again, being educated by that which they receive, turn and insensibly work upon those below them. While in one way superior influences work upon men, as *individuals*, at once and upon all alike, in the second way, influence works upon SOCIETY, by setting one circle to exert itself upon that which is next to it.

The power of each circle downward will be in proportion to the power which it has received from above. Now, it is to be observed, that influence is not transmitted through these successive portions of society, as through *lenses*, so that the truth, the influence, the power, at the end of its journey is just what it was at the start; but influence is *digested* at each stage; and that which the last circle does is not the repetition of what the first did, but is a new and separate influence of its own, wrought in it by a stimulative power above; and that stimulation is an effect wrought again within it, so that a power may begin at the top, as the merest speculation, as the most airy and subtile moral conception, which if falling directly upon the bottom of society would be utterly unfelt and wasted. But it falls upon a class of appreciative minds just beneath it, and educates them. They, in turn, do not attempt to transmit that which educated them, but something that shall produce the same effect in those next below. Thus there arises a series of creative forces. The highest creates life. That life creates a lower life. That, again, works another, to the end.

The Astronomical Observatory on Mount Adams, near Cincinnati, was built by the voluntary contributions of merchants, artisans, and laborers. It would at first be thought that nothing could have been done which would repay so little good to the donors! Is it so?

We believe that in time the masses of laboring men will stand many degrees higher than they would have done.

Its influence in the beginning will be upon a few. But it will make them capable of breeding power upon yet more, and these will be aroused, and will in turn arouse others. And that which at the beginning was abstract science, or science applied to things utterly moved from human necessities, will, in the end, work forth in fruits appropriate to all the levels of society, to the very lowest. To measure and weigh the sun, to find out hidden sparks of stars, to drive up nebula and compress them to a *shape*, to watch the coquettings, and conjunctions, and flirting transits of planets—what will be

the end of all these things? Better roads, lighter wheelbarrows, finer kerchiefs, lighter fingers to make them, neater carpenters and snugger homes, fewer needs and more supplies; in short, civilization among the masses.

It is doubtful whether in Bacon's lifetime one hundred men felt the direct influence of his philosophical thoughts. It is doubtful yet, whether two hundred men live who have studied his apothegms, maxims, and propositions. But they have been digested, and have passed into the arteries of science as blood, and they beat all over the world with vital throbs, and propulsions of knowledge. There is not a peasant to whom science has given more and better food; there is not a mechanic in the world to whom knowledge has given more luxuries than crowned heads had three hundred years ago, who does not owe it to the mind of Bacon. It is what men's *deeds do* that measures mental longevity. It seems to us as if the light which falls upon our path to-day, and glorifies grass, moss, flowers, and leaves, had just fallen from the sun. We seem to think that it leaped forth from the fountain but a moment ago, and ran to greet us with but a moment's life within it. But the light that falls upon your land to-day has been a solitary traveler for centuries through the long distance. When this light which now flames about your dwelling, sprang forth, Rome was yet imperial. The Parthenon stood, and Phidian Jupiter sat in colossal glory, the wonder of the world!

The common comforts of life, which to-day solace our way, were a century ago the rare and marvelous wonder of a few. The maxims of the nursery were, five hundred years ago, the abstract speculations of cloistered men. The airy and subtile principles which a thousand years ago were as high above men's heads as the top of Himalaya above its base, are now familiar truths. For truths are first clouds, then rain, and then harvests and food. Thus the philosophy of one age is the common sense of the next. Men are called imbecile for not understanding what they were called crazy for pretending to know, some hundreds of years ago. The influences at the top of society affect society to the bottom. They may work circuitously; they may work slowly, but it is because they work with such enormous fruitfulness. We may not recognize what of our advantages we owe to our higher institutions. We must not expect to find the learning, but only the *effect* of the learning. When men go into the orchard to see what the *sun* is good for, they must not expect little identical suns, balls of light, hanging on the trees. They that search for sunlight find apples.

We must not look for mathematicians, for lawyers, for physicians,

for deep-read and philosophical men, as the only fruits of Colleges. We must accept fruit of other kinds, better workmen, more intelligent artisans, more sagacious mechanics, more skillful inventors, more enterprising commercialists, more common people who read, think, and grow stout by reading and thinking! If Colleges give *learning* to the few, they give *intelligence* to the MANY.

There is no antagonism between the highest forms of institutions and the lowest, any more than there is between the higher and the lower boughs of a common tree. Common schools are the fruits which drop from the boughs of Colleges.

Colleges are not aristocratic. If they stand upon a higher plane, it is as stationary engines, to draw society up the long inclination. Where the higher circles, institutions, and classes of society are kept open, so that entrance and exit depends upon the *capacity* of those who will, they are never invidious or undemocratic. For Democracy does not mean a dead level. It means the liberty of being just what God made man to be, forbidding any to be propped up above their own worth, and any to be kept below their own capacity. In short, Democracy is a theory of government which declares *that every man shall find his own level.* And men at the top of society are as democratic as men at the bottom, if they have their right level.

Since the world began, I know of nothing so remarkable as the formation of society along our western border. Old nations have abandoned their former seats, and overrun new lands, carrying with them their flocks, their arms, and those personal habits which no man can leave behind. But they have carried no constitutions, no systems of law, no circles of schools, no colleges or universities, no institutions as a moral artillery, through which the zeal of the people should utter itself!

But our own people, scarcely less nomadic than the tented Arab, scarcely less impetuous than the Goth and Hun, pour abroad along the western wilderness in swarming millions, countless, with implements, with wealth of flocks and herds, and with a breadth and depth of civilization such as never emigrated before. They drive schools along with them, as shepherds drive flocks. They have herds of churches, academies, lyceums; and their religious and educational institutions go lowing along the western plains as Jacob's herds lowed along the Syrian hills.

You can not inoculate a nation with institutions whose animating ideas are foreign. Institutions must be indigenous. They are so with us. Nothing expresses the very American spirit so much as the fourfold forms of institutions, *Commercial*, *Civil*, *Religious*,

and *Educational.* The *Family* is a *natural* institution, and is the mother and nurse of all others.

It is this very wealth of institutions that brings from the West such an appeal for help. We have sent to the fairest fields that the sun ever lightened, or showers enriched, our sons and daughters, who know nothing but to rear along the vast intervales and valleys of the West a civilization as deep, as wide, as compact of social refinement, of intellectual culture, of moral richness, as that which hovers in their memory of dear old New England. But it is not possible for youthful States to lift up society in its whole breadth and depth at one lift. The *spirit* of institutions quickens their hearts, but how to give them bodies is their exceeding great task! It is enough to say of their willingness, that it is worthy of their parentage. To perform the duties of life, it is necessary first *to live.* A *living* is the first duty and necessity of emigrants. But with the burden of all the material tasks which underlay society, suddenly upon them, they are called to upheave, in gigantic proportions, the forms of higher institutions. *Ships* are first built, and then, sent on voyages. But Western States are as if men were rafted to sea with materials, and were obliged to build the ship under them while they sailed. Yea, and to grapple in desperate conflict with piratical errors and Red Rovers of ignorance, while yet they are laying down the decks, and setting up the rigging.

Now an appeal for help from such men is like the cry of mariners whom the ocean threatens, and storms and cruel enemies. Our colleges lie out on ocean prairies with their flags reversed—token of imminent peril. God has given into the hand of wealth the power of saving them!

1. Indeed, it is well, in our golden age, when all the influences of the world are commercial, when governments are swayed by commercial influences, when camps are ruled by the Bourse, when even morals and religion are almost obliged to ask leave to be of the till and the coffer—that we should console ourselves with the truth that money is as susceptible of MORAL influence as of secular. It is a power without moral character. We do not repeat the monk's exhortation, and urge men to yield their money to the church, but the church ought to yield their riches to the world. Inspired with a moral purpose, money is stronger than a king's scepter, or imperial armies. It can not control nature, nor open the eyes of the blind, nor awake the dumb to speak. Riches will not make a man eloquent that is slow of speech, nor wise if stupid, nor powerful and swift to sail along the courses of thought which set through the age in which he lives. Yet it will give him control of learning, of elo-

quence, of science, of moral influence. A rich man may rake open the haunts of ignorance and bring forth a thousand gifts of power and wisdom. Riches have in them no esthetic fineness, no creative art. But the esthetic spirit is often born in the bosom of poverty, and can not move. It is in the power of wealth to touch that victim whom Poverty, like a fabled sorcerer, has enchanted, and set it free.

Wealth can not preach, but it can rear up a thousand fiery tongues, like golden-mouthed Chrysostom, that *shall* go through the standing corn of the Philistines, and burn it to ashes. It can build, not alone canals, aqueducts, warehouses, ships, stores, and stately mansions. It can build school-houses as well as churches, academies, and colleges. Wealth gotten of the seas, may turn again, and, standing on the shore, in a hundred voices, and a hundred languages, speak to every island of the ocean.

Riches gotten of the spices of India, and precious offerings of the East, may gather up from the immortal tree of life, gayer fruits, sweeter incense, more fragrant and dripping gums and spices of the gospel, and send them back in life-giving exchange. Why should money be forever stigmatized as sordid, as selfish, as groveling, and penurious? Why should it not rise up and assert its moral power, and take its own appropriate honor, as a supreme dispenser of benevolence?

Have you repined that your hand was not gifted with the pen of literature? Then let a hundred hands be created by your beneficence which would not have moved but for your wealth!

Have you repined that your tongue, like a dull and heavy ship, carried your thoughts with slow voyages? Then avenge yourself by chartering clipper-tongues of other men that shall go over the deep, free as the winds.

There was never an hour when it was so much given to riches to stand in the robes of universal benefaction. It is the grand propelling force. It is the creative and stimulant influence of the world, and like the natural sun, it calls up all manner of growths, good and bad alike. It is the province of piety to exclude the weeds and poisonous fungi, and to give growth, by wealth, to the fragrant and fruit-bearing!

2. But while a spirit of true benevolence can not be channeled and confined to any single course, and should not be; while it should abound with daily generosities to meet the ever fresh aspects of recurring want, and to nourish the heart of the giver with the love and gratitude of the receiver, *yet* wealth has a right to employ

itself in works which are made noble by the element of *Time* and *Endurance*.

It is a poor and miserable vanity to be known only by name; to take measures for an empty immortality; for being vocalized as a name, echoing from age to age, significant of nothing; to lie in the calendar of history, as the dead names of Shephuphan, and Huram, and Gedor, and Shashack, and Shimhi lie in the Hebrew Chronicles, to tell us how utterly dead a man may be who has nothing to leave behind him but his name!

But there is a generous and worthy desire of posthumous *power*. One may well wish not to cease working at the grave's mouth. One may hope to live so as to vitalize with his spirit institutions or physical agencies, so that they shall work on in the spirit and power of Elias when the prophet is long dead!

Do you think it would have been a joy, unworthy of Bunyan, if he could have foreseen the errand of his immortal Pilgrim, who, having traveled to heaven himself, hath never ceased since to convoy travelers thither? The darkness of Bedford jail would have been wonderfully irradiated, as when sunrise comes upon night, could all the joy of after days have flooded backward, and poured in prophetic rays upon the imprisoned wretch, whose immortality of earthly glory was too fine and spiritual for the gross eyes of his cotemporaries.

Do you not think that a man might yearn, with a heavenly ambition, to catch the notes which blossomed in his soul of mighty joys, and give them form, so that they should go out of himself and enter into the world as a music, and go singing down the ages, bringing joy to those that lacked it, and expressing it fitly to those whose joy lacked a tongue?

If a man's heart, caught up into the womb of imagination, gives birth to hymns, the children of his life, the offspring of his soul, may he not compose himself with something of the temperate raptures of heaven itself, when he thinks what work he shall yet do upon the earth by the ministration of his songs and hymns that will bear his life forward, and with noble metempsychosis give it scope again, and life beyond the touch of death—to minister only for good, until the day come, when earthly hymns and praises are caught up and mingled with the eternal choir?

The sound of coming ages should be in every man's ears! That is a voice which will inspire us as no hoary prophet or mighty philosopher. And he who in life becomes vital with the Spirit of God, and yearns with a divine longing to give himself for the life of the world, shall have imparted to him something of Divine immortality,

and be permitted to rear up and send forth airy but stately purposes to sail upon the sea of time, unharmed by winds, and unfoundered by the waves!

But who can measure the scope and breadth of that working which he shall perpetuate who trusts his spirit, not upon the bird-wing of song, or in the crystal vase of a book, but who incarnates himself in an institution suited to the universal want, common to all times, and whose nature it is to be a parent power, prolific of subsidiary powers, sending forth whatever influences and agencies are required by society in all its depths? Your hand may work yet a thousand years hence; your thoughts may beat in the veins of life in ages to come! From heaven you may look back and see your life yet on earth, and in Time, as a mirror, behold your form and spirit!

But men must rise to the pattern of the age in which they live. As yet, we have had very little individual heroism. The power that is in men to work through all time single-handed, for the world, is little felt. Men are too modest or too selfish to suspect their possible usefulness.

We are a nation whose peculiarity it is to develop the strongest state of society and the most intense individualism of the citizen. The independence, the enterprise, the universal resource, the executive power of our people is in the mouth of the world. What such men can do for industry, for commerce, for all material forms of public good, we know. But we have a right to expect from such men new ideas, new developments, and new examples in Christian beneficence.

We have a right to expect that men will seek wealth with precisely the same *ambitions* and purposes as men seek learning, not to be absorbed in their own selfish enjoyment, but as the means of acting upon the public, and of shaping the age in which they live!

While we have not as yet tried nor proved one half the power which there is in the accumulation of small sums gathered from the whole mass of the community—single drops that accumulate and gather force and swell to rivers—so we have as yet but faintly conceived the power of individualism in Beneficence. Laboring men, commercial men, all men of mere business, have it in their power to institute great principles in such a way that their work on earth shall not end for centuries!

Professorships should be the work of single churches. Nay, they should be the work of *single men*. Why should not young men, who know that God has given them genius for accumulation, rise from the paltry precedents of expenditure which ostentatious

vanity sets, from the miserable methods of Pride, and give the world to see what glory wealth may achieve, how it may associate itself with the noblest history of one's country, and become a moral power of superior influence!

And men must remember that the world is moving on no mean pattern. As God in every age is infusing himself more and more in human affairs, so events are swelling and affairs moving through larger circuits and with statelier steps. And if men mean to give moral dignity to their wealth, and wing it for immortal flight, they must not take counsel of selfishness or of mammon; they must rise to a nobler conception of the power that is in them, and of the offices which God offers to their wealth!

Why should whole States be canvassed to endow single colleges? There are single churches in every city of our land who might, without the slightest inconvenience, plant once in five years, and completely endow, a seminary of learning on whose summit the sun of a thousand years should shine!

But why do I speak of churches? *One* Sampson was enough to take the gates and posts thereof and march away unhelped. And there are men among us, many of them, if aroused to the consciousness of the strength that is in them, who might carry away the gates and posts of the castles of Ignorance—might do better—build castles of Knowledge right over against them, and kill darkness by thrusting it through with light!

Why should not men be found who alone should rear up their monuments before they are dead, that shall never let them die?

We do not reproach one for cutting his name upon his monument. But time and wasting soon rub out the very granite, and waste the marble letters. The grave itself grows smooth, and at length all memorial perishes. Only invisible letters last. The name of Harvard is as sharp cut to-day as a hundred years ago. Two hundred years men have walked the halls of Harvard, and not one hour of that time has its founder's name been unsyllabled!

The stone that began to hold the name of Yale has long since let go, and relinquished its trust. But every year his monument has grown, and the letters of his name, changed to light, cast forth a mild radiance through every State to the Pacific!

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